

Montgomery County receives more transportation funding

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Maryland Secretary of Transportation Robert Flanagan announced Thursday that Montgomery County will receive \$3.2 billion in state funding for transportation over the next six years.

Noting that the state's \$13 billion transportation program spanning 2007-2012 has been approved, Flanagan said transportation funding in Maryland has increased between 30

and 40 percent, "and the county is enjoying the fruits of that increased emphasis on transportation."

Construction of the Rockville Pike and Montrose Road intersection will begin two years earlier than planned in fiscal 2008, he said. Preliminary engineering, relocating utilities and buying up property surrounding Georgia Avenue at Randolph Road also will begin in fiscal 2008 for that over/underpass, he said.

Both projects were accelerated with the addition of some of the county's \$160 million in dedicated transportation funds.

"Those are prototypes from which we can reach agreements in the near future about additional projects," he said.

County Council member Nancy Floreen, a transportation committee member, said she wanted to see the interchange at Interstate 270 and Watkins Mill Road advanced, in addition to the Georgia Avenue and Rockville Pike projects.

"The state has programmed about \$100 million for a variety of projects in their development program. We need about \$4 billion to get these projects on the ground. I want to know what the proposal is to find additional revenue sources for the transportation trust fund. Obviously, we have to think creatively about how to get these projects funded," said Floreen.

The county also would like to see action on the Intercounty Connector bikeway plan and begin to study the Georgia Avenue/Route 97 Montgomery Hills plan, said Larry Cole, highway coordinator for the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission.

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